

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL FLORENCE

TO AMEMBASSY ROME

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SUBJECT: SOCIALIST PATY IN TUSCANY

1. TUSCAN SOCIALIST PARTY REGIONAL COMMITTEE HELD HEATED 12-HOUR MEETING EVENING JULY 18, MORNING JULY 19 TO ORGANIZE PARTY MACHINERY IN WAKE SOCIALIST NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING IN ROME. FOLLOWING ARE THE PRINCIPAL RESULTS THIS MEETING.

2. REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF 13 ELECTED WITH FOLLOWING COMPOSITIONS: ORTHODOX DE MARTINIANI -5; DISSIDENT DE MARTINIANI 2; MANCINIANI -2; AUTONOMOUS- 2; LEFT WING-2.

3. PAOLO BENELLI, FORMER VICE MAYOR OF PRATO AND FORMER VICE REGIONAL SECRETARY SOCIALIST PARTY ELECTED AS NEW REGIONAL SECRETARY REPLACING ANDREA VON BERGER. REGIONAL COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF 51 MEMBERS AND BENELLI RECEIVED 25 VOTES. HE WAS THUS DECLARED ELECTED AS HAVING "RELATIVE MAJORITY" OF VOTES.

4. REGIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS ARGUED AMONG THEMSELVES AT LENGTH REGARDING PROPOSAL TO ELIMINATE ALL CURRENTS (CORRENTI) WITHIN PARTY BUT EFFORT NOT SUCCESSFUL.

5. HIGHLIGHT OF COMMITTEE MEETING ACCORDING OUR SOURCES
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WAS FACT THAT TUSCAN REGIONAL COMMITTEE WAS FIRST REGIONAL

COMMITTEE TO ALIGN ITSELF WITH RESULTS NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING
IN ROME AND PUBLICLY SUPPORT ELECTION CRAXI AS NEW PARTY SECRETARY.

6. INTERESTING SIDELIGHT THIS MEETING WAS REPLACEMENT OF
VON BERGER BY BENELLI. ALTHOUGH VON BERGER STILL HAS CONSI-
DERABLE SUPPORT WITHIN TUSCAN SOCIALIST PARTY ORGANIZATION AND
RANKS, HE EFFECTIVELY ELIMINATED HIMSELF AS RESULT SEVERAL
FACTORS. FIRST OF ALL, HE WAS ANGERED AND DISAPPOINTED WHEN
NATIONAL COMMITTEE IN ROME ELIMINATED HIS NAME FROM THOSE WHO
WOULD RUN ON SOCIALIST TICKET FOR CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES FROM
TUSCANY. AS A RESULT, HE TOOK NO ACTIVE PARTY IN POLITICAL
CAMPAIGN AND WENT SO FAR AS TO SPEND APPROXIMATELY ONE WEEK IN
THE US DURING HIGHT CAMPAIGN. THIS, OF COURSE, RESULTED IN
CONSIDERABLE CRTICISM OF HIM BY LOCAL SOCIALISTS. SECOND FACTOR
WAS PRES REPORT THAT FISH CANNING FIRM HE OWNS IN CALABRIA WAS
UNDER INVESTIGATION FOR "IRREGULARITIES". THIRDLY, LAS PRESS
REPORT WHICH VON BERGER ADMITTED TO THAT HE HAD APPLIED AT THE
AGE OF 18 TO BECOME A MEMBER OF MSI. VON BERGER, WHO IS NOW 36,
STATED THAT APPLICATION NEVER ACTED ON. INCIDENTIALLY, AS
RESULT HIS NOT BEING CONSIDERED AS CANDIDATE FOR DEPUTY, HE
SWITCHED HIS ALLEGIANCE FROM DE MARTINO TO MANCINI AND THIS
ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO ELECTION OF BENELLI.

7. BENELLI, WHO IS ALSO 36, IS A GRADUATE OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF PISA IN LAW. HE JOINED THE SOCIALIST PARTY ABOUT 10 YEARS
AGO WHEN HE LEFT THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY. IN ADDITION TO
HAVING BEEN VICE MAYOR OF PRATO, HE WAS ALSO CITY COUNCILMAN
IN CHARGE OF PUBLIC WORKS. HE BECAME VICE REGIONAL SECRETARY
FOR TUSCANY IN FEBRUARY 1976. POLITICALLY HE IS REPORTED TO
BE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH VON BERGER AND TUSCAN REGIONAL PRESI-
DENT LELIO LAGORIO. IN FACT, VON BERGER IS CREDITED WITH ENGI-
NEERING HIS ELECTION AS THE NEW REGIONAL SECRETARY. GORDON

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